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ABSTRACT

The booklet is intended to assist teachers in developing literature units of study that will enable the gifted student in grades 4-6 to better understand the different kinds of reading material, the human condition, and himself as a person. Following the explanation of the objectives and principles of literature study, different genres are defined. Use of reading materials from many countries and in many forms is said to help teach the commonality of human experience. Some suggestions are made concerning methods of presenting literature to gifted students. The elements of fictional narrative and poetry appropriate to the intermediate grades are examined as they relate to teaching the techniques of writing literature and enabling the gifted student to make evaluative judgments on literature. Also considered is how the study of literature can help develop both subject-area skills and higher intellectual skills in gifted students and help them to realize their potential. Appended is a list of suggested books and recordings appropriate for gifted intermediate level students. (KW)

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Teaching Gifted Children Literature in Grades Four Through Six

CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Wilson Riles, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Sacramento, 1972

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GIFTED RESOURCE CENTER
MATEO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
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Teaching Gifted Children Literature in Grades Four Through Six

Prepared for the

DIVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
California State Department of Education

By

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
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GIFTED RESOURCE CENTER
SAN MATEO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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FOREWORD

Mentally gifted students comprise only a small part of the student population. Nevertheless, they require a large part of the teacher's time and talent. Since gifted students can assimilate an ordinary curriculum with ease, the teacher must utilize many resources in order to challenge such students successfully.

The gifted students very often become the eminent leaders in education, industry, and government. However, if their special educational needs are not met, the gifted will likely become frustrated, and this frustration may prevent their reaching constructive goals. If such a thing were to happen, both the state and the nation would suffer a great loss.

The State Department of Education has conducted a project to develop appropriate curriculum material for teaching the mentally gifted. This publication is one in a series from that project.

It is my hope and belief that these publications designed especially for the mentally gifted will be most useful both to the gifted students themselves and to the teachers who instruct them.

Wilson Riles

Superintendent of Public Instruction

PREFACE

This publication is one of the products of an education project authorized and funded under provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title V. It is intended for use by the teachers of pupils whose mental ability is such that they are classified as mentally gifted. It is also recommended for use by administrators, consultants, and other professional personnel involved in helping gifted children.

Teaching Gifted Children Literature in Grades Four Through Six is one of a group of curriculum materials designed for use by teachers of the mentally gifted in grades one through three, four through six, seven and eight, and nine through twelve. These materials were prepared under the direction of Mary N. Meeker, Associate Professor of Education, and James Magary, Associate Professor of Educational Psychology, both of the University of Southern California.

Also developed as part of the education project is a series of curriculum guides for use in the teaching of mentally gifted minors in elementary and secondary schools. The guides contain practical suggestions that teachers can use to advantage in particular subject areas. These guides were prepared under the direction of John C. Gowan, Professor of Education, and Joyce Sonntag, Assistant Professor of Education, both of California State University at Northridge.

LESLIE BRINEGAR
Associate Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Chief, Division of Special Education

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Chapter 1

Instruction in Literature: Purpose and Principles

The purpose of this publication is to assist in the development of courses of study that will enable the gifted child to understand better (1) the different kinds of reading material; (2) the human condition, through the study of the literature of different countries; and (3) himself, as a person.

General Content

This publication contains discussions of different kinds of reading material; that is, myths, folktales, fables, biography, letters, and drama. The specific characteristics of each kind of material receive particular emphasis. Through the presentation of a variety of material from many countries, the second objective of the publication is attained. An understanding of the human condition cannot be attained in a direct, informational manner; instead, it depends on the development of the higher intellectual skills.

The third objective, that of enabling the student to attain a better understanding of himself, is taught by the use of materials from many countries and in many forms. By this means the gifted child learns of the commonality of human experience.

Also included in the publication are the elements of fictional narrative and poetry appropriate to grades four through six. The purpose of this material is to teach the techniques of writing literature, enabling the gifted child to make judgments on literature as to the skill and style of the writer. The final chapter is devoted to a discussion of the development of the gifted child's skills and potential.

The general purpose of this publication is, then, to provide a framework in which the subject matter matches the interest of the child and in which the material provided expands the child's understanding of his relationship to others and helps him to obtain a better understanding of himself.

Appreciation of Literature

Those who teach literature to gifted children have as their primary objective the appreciation of literature by the children. Appreciation

of literature is built on many things, such as the excitement of the world of written ideas; background information on writers; knowledge of writing techniques; the place of American literature in the world of literature; and a deeper understanding of the subtle meanings and connotations of words in English. Like their teachers, children appreciate the different elements in literature.

Complementary Objective

A complementary objective for gifted children in any discipline is the development of intellectual abilities. Literature provides one of the best means of developing these abilities. Creative thinking, inquiring, critical thinking, assessing, evaluating, comparing, contrasting, and judging can be achieved by increasing the gifted child's insight into society and himself. Study of the major themes in literature leads to an understanding of many cultures. The universality of human experiences provides a basis for the child's understanding of himself.

An analogy can be made with the appreciation of art. When one states that he has an appreciation of a painting, what does he mean? He may mean that he understands the purpose of the artist, or that he has a sense of understanding the painting, or that he is aware of the sense of beauty, or that he appreciates the relationship of the painting in its timeliness. He may also mean that he has an awareness of the artist's background, nationality, culture, and personal biography. Although he does not need all of this knowledge, he will be able to appreciate the work of art to the degree that he has knowledge of it. This process of appreciation, whether partial or complete, is the same for understanding and appreciating literature.

Meaning of Appreciation

Appreciation occurs when communication takes place. Appreciation is the understanding of what the writer wants to communicate and how well he accomplishes the task. Teaching an appreciation of literature includes discussion of the creative process, the techniques of writing in various kinds of literature, and the characteristics of each kind of literature.

Development of the Intellect

In his Structure of Intellect model, Guilford lists five types of intellectual operations: cognition, memory, divergent production, convergent production, and evaluation.[1] As a rule, classroom

[1]See J. P. Guilford, *The Nature of Human Intelligence.* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967.

teachers teach the convergent production skills more than any others. Convergent production is essential in the study of literature, but divergent production, evaluation, and cognition are abilities that can also be developed through assignments in literature.

Divergent production includes independent, critical, abstract, and creative thinking. As the teacher leads the students to inquire into why a specific story or poem has been successful, they become more proficient. The abilities that the students develop are the same as those that the writer must use when he creates his work.

Evaluation skills may be so undisciplined and haphazard in their function that they are not fully serviceable to the child. Evaluation is rarely taught as a skill. Through the study of literature, one can develop the ability to assess, evaluate, judge, make decisions, compare, plan, and contrast.

Individual Differences

Children are placed in the gifted program because they have been identified by all available evidence (not just an IQ score) as being in the upper 2 percent of general mental ability. It should be noted that IQ scores alone do not sufficiently differentiate specific abilities. Each child in a gifted program will have a different profile of potentialities and abilities that must be assessed and developed independently.[2] Material can be presented so that different tasks will develop abilities like divergent behavior and evaluation. As the child progresses in his study of literature, he is more apt to develop these abilities.

Early Demonstration

Individual differences among gifted children are demonstrated early in their school career. The members of a group of gifted children probably differ among themselves more than any other single homogeneous group because of the individual development of their potential and because of their different interests. Some children will show potential ability in divergent production; others, in evaluative abilities. These children may also show deficiencies or weaknesses in some intellectual abilities and in literary skills.

Deficiencies

A child with a good imagination may have spent most of his independent time reading fiction while another, vastly curious, has read and stored innumerable facts. Others more interested in

[2]See Guilford, Meeker, and Torrance in the list of "Selected References" at the back of this publication.

mathematics or motor skills may not be reading at a level commensurate with their giftedness. Some may not be adequate in writing skills. Whether these deficiencies are intellectual or literary, the teacher must evaluate the needs of the children in his class so that he can satisfy them through curriculum experiences.

Uneven Learning

There are preconceived understandings and facts that the child is expected to learn. But since each child acquires them at his own rate, one cannot expect uniform learning from any group of gifted pupils. For example, the teacher can expand one child's ability to evaluate by asking questions about the motives of the writer. The teacher may need to explain that there can be several possible motives and may therefore accept, as an example of critical evaluation, the motive the child gives. The child can then be requested to substantiate the motive he presents. If this procedure is not followed, the study becomes an exercise in reading; the child's intellectual growth is limited to cognition and convergent production. Appreciation, then, depends on and leads to the development of higher intellectual skills.

Gifted children read children's literature; they also read adult literature and frequently explore a subject far beyond what is available in children's literature. Because adult literature often has concepts and nuances that the child does not comprehend fully, his perception may not be that which the adult perceives. The teacher must be sensitive enough to travel the same ideological path the child takes in his exploration. Developing his understanding and freeing him to make his own interpretation of a literary work increases his evaluative growth beyond the scope of the teacher's interpretation.

Knowledge of Literature

Unless the district has a blanket policy of testing all children in the first grade, the child identified as gifted this early has demonstrated a high verbal ability. He usually comes to the study of literature with a good ability in reading. For those, however, who do not have good reading ability, minor changes in individual lesson assignments must be made to meet the level of his attainment. It is possible that basic understandings of literature have been introduced in the primary grades.

Nonfiction

The gifted child who is curious will have begun reading nonfiction by the time he enters fourth grade. He will have read biographies and perhaps will have read deeply in many subjects. It is easy to misinterpret his interest in nonfiction and expect that his understanding of literature extends to knowledge beyond the realms of the book. This misinterpretation is not likely to occur, however, if the teacher keeps in mind that at this age level the gifted generally divide themselves into three groups. One group reads extensively in one area. A second group reads extensively but in many different areas. A third group may not yet read well enough to have embraced the world of excitement in literature. The teacher who is sensitive to these differences will develop a different kind of program for each. If the child's interest is captured, his teacher will make available some related volumes for his use.

Fiction

When the gifted child has read fiction, he has frequently read a series of books like the Oz stories, the Nancy Drew stories, and the stories of the Hardy Boys. Unfortunately, these stories sometimes do not meet with the approval of classroom teachers (or parents), and these adults may actually try to discourage his reading. It must be kept in mind that these books fill the child's need for fiction and are instrumental in his development of love for reading. This interest can often serve as a foundation for later study of literature.

Book Selection

Where does love of literature begin? A child who reads nonfiction is informed of new facts or gains further understanding even though the material may be difficult and partly obscure. In fiction, however, he asks primarily that the material be exciting or interesting. The study of literature can begin with either nonfiction or fiction. The skillful teacher will lead the child to select a book that meets the child's objectives at the same time that it is suitable to the objectives of the teacher.

Method of Presentation

Literature for the gifted calls for an approach in which the subject matter consists of facts and understandings about literature that help the child to understand the creative composition of what he reads.

Development of Abilities

If this matter becomes stored in the pupil's memory and if he becomes familiar with the world of literature as the result of informational disbursement, then he gains only one objective in the study of literature. His accomplishment is rewarding to himself, but he will lack the skills to further his development. Abilities other than

memory must be developed if a child's higher intellectual potential is to be tapped. These abilities can be developed through the study of literature.

Individual Differences

The teacher's method of presentation is as important as the material presented. The gifted child at this grade level requires, along with special material, improved forms of presentation. Specific characteristics that make the child especially receptive to improved forms of presentation are the following:

- He is apt to have a deeper interest in one or more topics.
- He can work on his own for longer periods of time.
- He has various levels of intellectual ability.

From these generalizations it follows that teaching procedures for developing individual differences must be fully utilized.

For the purpose of good classroom management, the teacher must work with the full class at times. He should, however, occasionally establish small groups where interaction takes place between pupils and between teacher and pupil.

Individual work directed towards a pupil's unique ability may be assigned in the same manner as individual reading is assigned. Brief individual conferences help to ascertain progress and to encourage independent work, providing an opportunity for a child who does not feel secure in large-group discussions to develop feelings of adequacy about his progress. The planning of future assignments can be handled similarly and should be based on what the child needs and where the teacher finds him in his progress.

Preferences of the Gifted Child

The gifted child readily accepts literature that is entertaining or interesting. He may ignore new words whose meanings he does not know in his attempts to read material that has strong appeal. Plot is important to him. For example, the simplicity of a fairy tale may not meet the complexity that the gifted child is capable of accepting; but if other elements are complex, he will overlook the lack of complexity in plot. Fairy tales or fantasies that have a higher level of complexity are Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince,* Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time,* and Jane Langdon's *Diamond in the Window.*

The plot structure and the events that make up the story must be worthy of the child's interest and must unfold within his span of attention. Although, because of his immaturity, he may not be capable of understanding the deeper concepts a writer may include in

poetry or adult literature, he will, nevertheless, obtain a general awareness of the information that he will integrate at his own level.

The gifted child is usually interested in a particular field and is apt to become engrossed in a specific type of fiction. Although parents and teachers may feel he should expand his interest into other areas, they should not impose value judgments on the child and interfere with his selection of recreational reading. If the subject matter is well presented, we can assume that his interest will change when satisfied and that the demands of his own intellect will prevail. No one should attempt to guess what parameters a gifted youngster draws from his reading. Quotations like "One never hears the airy footfalls of what almost happens" and "If beauty is made for seeing, then beauty is its own excuse for being" establish wisdom in the child who comprehends them and may encourage the sensitivity that underlies creative potential.

Fiction based on biography and history attracts children who seek information and can be read for the content as much as for entertainment value. On the other hand, when children search for reasons why poetry is lasting and appealing, they develop creative analytical abilities. Listening skills, too, are emphasized through poetry. A unit on appreciation of creativity in writing poems can begin with listening for metric patterns in poems.

Chapter 2

Elements in the Study of Literature

Generally speaking, little reading material that the gifted child finds both interesting and suitable to his needs can be found. The gifted child is more aware of the world in which he lives; he is aware of its problems and the changes taking place. Television has brought him first-hand documentaries about life, about social issues, and about politics. Comparable information about these subjects is unavailable in children's nonfiction. To read material about these subjects, the child must turn to adult material – the newspaper or periodicals.

The solution to this problem lies in searching out and developing a library of new reading material. To effect this solution, teachers may form (1) groups to research adequate adult reading material and collect it; or (2) ongoing inservice projects to scale down high-level, high-interest material. When English usage is taught simultaneously with literature, the teacher is able to free students to research the issues, study them as a group, and write their own reports.

Literary Content

Literature for the gifted should primarily emphasize social understanding of a people. The teacher may go from larger social understandings to the understanding of self-concept, or vice versa. In either case the literature of a people is a form of communication. *Blue Willow* and *The Red Pony* are books that base content on similarities and differences among cultures. They offer direct narratives that show personal knowledge and social insight. Resolutions of conflicts found in such books create in the reader a better understanding of the self.

Human Experience

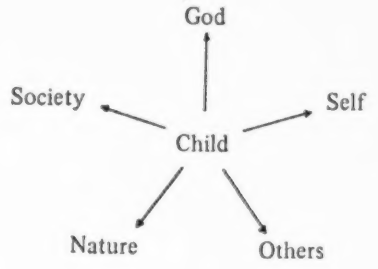
Books about other lands and cultures bring to the gifted child an understanding of the universality of human experience (for example, haiku poetry from Japan; folktales from Europe, Africa, or Asia; fairy tales from Germany or England) and reflect the primitive values of the peoples.

Concept of Self

The universality of the self-concept can be taught through books that describe common feelings and common goals of peoples. Better self-realization is developed through fiction, which allows the child to identify vicariously with the primary character. The reader understands the character's action within the reader's own framework of values and internalizes his individual growth as to values.

Relationships and Responsibilities

Specific subject matter is customarily taught through a direct informational process, but there are nuances of understandings that the child, once exposed to, must accept on his own. These are understandings of his relationships and responsibilities to God, to himself, to others, to nature, and to his society. Through honest experiences in the world of literature, the child begins to develop an inner self; he begins to establish values that are reflected in his actions as he takes on the responsibility of becoming a member of his culture. The child's relationships are illustrated as follows:



Some of the more basic of these learnings begin before he comes to school. But by this time he is aware of conflicts between what he has learned and what he is exposed to in the media, on the playground, and perhaps at home. He seeks clarification of his experiences in his study of literature and in discussions with peers, teachers, and parents. The search for knowledge about himself includes seeing himself as a member of a family, a community, and a country as well as a partaker of humanity.

More than others, the gifted child has the ability to change the world into which he has been born. But whether he becomes a leader or not, he needs exposure to values that enrich life and give him satisfaction and appreciation in being part of humanity.

Development of Values

Contributing to the development of values that establish resolution of purpose and flexibility for living in a changing world is the study of myths, folktales, fables, biography, letters, and drama.

Myths

Myths are the folktales of ancient peoples. Commonly known, for example, are the many Greek and Roman myths. Important concepts to be grasped here are (1) that the values and concerns of ancient Greece and Rome are both like and unlike our values and concerns today; and (2) that these similarities and differences are reflected in the behavior of mythological characters.

Concept of the hero. The concept of the hero as one who has the frailties of man is established in Greek mythology; a hero is the offspring of a god and a mortal. Throughout the ages young persons have needed good models with whom to identify. A hero is one who has qualities and capabilities surpassing those of ordinary men.

Major gods. The Greek and Roman names of the major gods and the object of their concern are as follows:

Greek name	*Roman name*	*Object of concern*
Zeus	Jupiter	Sky (heaven)
Hera	Juno	Marriage
Poseidon	Neptune	Sea
Demeter	Ceres	Corn
Apollon	Apollo	Law
Artemis	Diana	Hunting
Hermes	Mercury	Commerce
Athene	Minerva	Learning
Hephaistos	Vulcan	Handicrafts
Aphrodite	Venus	Procreation
Ares	Mars	War
Dionysos	Bacchus	Wine

Minor gods. The minor gods, or at least those of less importance during the Golden Age, were the following:

Greek name	*Roman name*	*Object of concern*
Hestia	Vesta	Hearth
Eros	Amor	Love
Helios	Sol	Sun
Selene	Luna	Moon
Pan	Pan	Flocks
Persephone	Prosperpina	Springtime
Hades	Pluto	Underworld

Comparison of myths. Comparison of Greek and Roman mythology with Egyptian mythology shows stark differences of concerns. Waltari's book, *The Egyptian,* is recommended for only the most advanced and mature reader. It sheds light on some values held by Egyptians. The teacher may, however, prefer to abstract pertinent issues from the book and lecture on them to the more advanced group.

A general knowledge of the Greek gods is necessary because they are influential in several of the heroic stories. Specific knowledge about heroes depends on the story selection. A hero acts with resolution of purpose and exhibits respect and courage. The young reader establishes his own identity and values. A characteristic of heroic myths is that approval of correct behavior and disapproval for lack of faith or honesty is a primary motivating force for the hero. The values of mythology are not all synonymous with those of Christianity. If these exceptions are contrasted and evaluated realistically in group discussions, the exercise can lead the more inquisitive to further study of tenets in philosophy.

Related study. The reading of myths should lead to interest in the history and life of the people that are dealt with. Exploration of language can also be taught. Word origins and the use of mythological words in the fields of science can be related to the literature of myths. The interpretation of these myths in art and music can be included in the study. Finally, issues and concerns that have been reflected in philosophic thought can be resolved.

Parameters. The relationship of Greek mythology to recorded history is clarified when a time line of the period is worked out. The Golden Age of Greece (479 B.C. – 431 B.C.), Athens, and the Peloponnesian War are related subjects. Time lines help make the history of the period comprehensible. Summaries or treatises about Homer from the eighth century B.C. and Aesop from the sixth century B.C. can be used as resource materials. A few literature-oriented gifted pupils may want to read a good translation of the *Iliad;* or learn about the heroic battles of the Greeks and Persians at Marathon, Salamis, and Thermopylae; or read *Aesop's Fables.* Greek mythology gives rise to questions about familiar names like Aristotle and Socrates. The contributions of these men can be simplified and related to the study. Students who show slower reading rates and who demonstrate a lack of word-attack skills may need to stay with the fables and myths longer. In these instances it may be necessary to make exercises in phonetics and linguistics a part of the unit.

The concept of *hero* is primarily defined by physical abilities and action, but there are other, more subtle qualities. Children can define

the hero in terms other than those concerning physical bravery. What are heroic qualities? Was Pericles a hero? Was Socrates a hero? The defining of hero and its application to our customs and our history may illuminate differences in standards of behavior. What were the heroic qualities of Abraham Lincoln? Of George Washington? Of Dwight Eisenhower and John Kennedy while president? Other books on mythology to be included if students want to satisfy their interest include books on Mexican, Teutonic, Black African, Egyptian, Japanese, and American Indian mythology.

Folktales

Folktales are stories handed down by a people from generation to generation. They are primarily translations of values, beliefs, and customs. Folktales usually have their beginnings in oral communication and at some later time may have been written and preserved. Some, however, like Joel Chandler Harris' stories, and even Mark Twain's, were written first. The difference between these two types of folktales is subtle, but it is vital to identify each to gain an accurate assessment of the values and descriptions of like contained in a tale.

American folk history. Two of the five sources for understanding self, country, and people can be developed through the study of folktales because some of the American tales are from the not-too-distant past. America is rich with folktales, and its folk history is told with an honesty that is difficult to duplicate. American folk history, though not yet complete with adequate coverage of Negro contributions, can be articulated with American economic and geographic presentations. They are particularly helpful in establishing geographical differences among our peoples.

Folk music. Folk music retells many of the folktales, and recordings easily integrate the study of folk literature. This variation is also appealing to musically gifted and creatively gifted children, who enjoy activities and projects as much as sedentary reading.

Comparison with myths. Although the original purpose of folktales was to entertain, they also reflect the concerns of the people in the same way that myths did for more primitive peoples. Folktales also include the hero concept, but they add a new element rarely present in mythology, that of humor. Folktales have a strong appeal to children in grades four through six because of the humor, excitement, heroics, exaggerations, and implausibility of some of the plots.

Value of folktales. Folktales bring to the pupil an awareness of national or regional values, customs, and differences among the

people. The land is usually described in background material, and occasionally one may find a folktale that lends itself to the study of contemporary issues such as conservation; e.g., "The Legend of Johnny Appleseed." The American folktale "Casey Jones" illustrates changes that have taken place in America since the beginning of industrialization. Now that we are in the midst of the computer age, how will the computer be written into our folk history? Children comprehend the changes modern society has gone through when they learn through folktales that a society's time line will show differences between a nation unconcerned with conservation, a nation changing from agriculture to industrialization, and a nation in its infancy as a computerized society.

Fables

The earliest fables were compiled by Aesop. Fables are expressions of moral learning in the form of entertaining stories. More so than myths, fables are concerned with the behavior of man and his responsibility to society. More subjective than objective, fables are able to convince the reader of an idea that he would reject if it were presented in a direct, informational way. The fable, a simple form of literature based on this insight, can be used to establish the pupil's ability to understand different motives in literature. For example, the investigations of Piaget into the development of the concept of justice tell us that by the age of ten or eleven a child is able to accept the idea of reasonable punishment for bad behavior. We have reason to believe that the gifted establish this relationship earlier. Folktales can be very amusing to them, while fables confirm their natural tendency toward justice.

Biography

Few types of reading matter are as interesting to the gifted child as biography. The gifted child who likes to gather information accepts biography most willingly. At his level of competence, he is able to understand distinctions between the intent of the hero in the biography and the bias of the biographer. Many approaches exist to writing biography, and, if noted, these differences in approach can be the subject of study, for the gifted child tends to be literal-minded. Such a child will select biography according to the subject and seldom according to the writer. The teacher can examine the biography with the student to make clear to him what kind it is. Many biographies are published to capture a popular market; others are poor literary attempts camouflaged by the name of the subject. A good biography gives insight into the hero's motives, the crises in his experience, and his accomplishments. Most biographies written for

children present a model of good behavior and good character and are, therefore, useful for helping children attain their identity. The biography presents the values cherished by the subject, enabling the reader to begin to understand how values are transformed into action by the subject and how they result in his unique accomplishments.

Letters

A collection of letters is an extension of biography. The letters are normally written by one adult to another, but the gifted child who can comprehend this level of communication will enjoy the privilege at times of sharing the confidences of one close friend to another, gaining additional insight into their personal lives. In general, however, the study of letters is left to students in the upper grades.

Drama

Drama presents a story through the use of dialogue. It develops characterization through verbal expression. An exciting aspect of drama is that it is written to be spoken; reading the parts aloud is an essential part of its study. Drama offers special opportunities for gifted children who need to work in small groups. When the child assumes the role of a character in reading a play, he entertains a new perspective about the actions of others. Dramatization and interaction with other pupils can develop cooperation, understanding, and mutual respect.

Drama does not have to be limited to literature presented in dramatic form; other forms may be changed into dramatic form by the pupils. Transformation processes are very creative and act as personalized communications.

Chapter 3

Elements of Fictional Narrative and Poetry

In its broadest sense, *prose* is the term applied to all forms of written or spoken expression that do not have a regular rhythmic pattern. *Poetry* is the term applied to the many forms in which man has given rhythmic expression to his most imaginative and intense perceptions. This chapter deals with the elements of poetry and with the elements of only one kind of prose, fictional narrative.

Fictional Narrative

The gifted child should be familiar with elements of fictional narrative; that is, with setting (including time); characterization; plot; point of view (voice); and theme. No element stands by itself; each interacts with other elements in the narrative. At times one element may even take on the purpose of another element.

It is not suggested that the following description of the elements of narrative form be used by the teacher in sequence. Rather, the presentation is made as a reference and aid to the organization of information. These are the elements of which the critical evaluation of narrative is made, and the sensitive gifted child can better read tragedies, for example, and accept them when he has learned to understand the elements of a plot.

Setting

The setting of a narrative is the physical and sometimes spiritual background against which the action of a narrative takes place. But the setting provides more than a mere description of the place where characters exist and events happen; it is important to the development of character and helps to establish motive. Although motive is difficult to discover, it can be ferreted out.

Fairy tales. The first experience most children have in reading narrative form is fairy tales. Since the setting of fairy tales is imaginary and is seldom described in detail, it permits fantasy to be conjured up in the mind of the listener or reader as he desires it to be. This avoidance of detail aids the child's imagination considerably. As

the child matures, he is less satisfied with creating his own imaginary setting and begins to prefer that details be given.

Various methods. Writers may use several methods to set a scene. One method begins with the general scene and works toward a specific item. For example: *In a small valley at the foot of a large mountain there was a small cottage. Through the window we see a little girl.* Another method begins with the specific and works toward the larger scene. For example: *From the window of her little house, Meg could see the bright valley and the great mountain beyond.*

A third method develops setting by building it in stages. In this method descriptive passages occur throughout the material that reset the scene, recreate the mood, and redefine the characters. By the inclusion of some items and the exclusion of others, the writer conveys to the reader how he (the reader) should react. This device is most apparent in ghost stories, where opening paragraphs are usually concerned with the setting.

Examples. The material read by the gifted child at this level should include examples of approaches to setting. Comparisons of the ways in which several books develop settings inform students about conformity and exceptions. The exceptions provide the gifted child with opportunities to develop his abilities in divergent thinking.

Fairy tales, imaginative literature, and science fiction have their settings in reality, in contrast to nonsense, which is based on oblique and reverse reality. If a writer wishes to describe a land unlike his own, he uses opposites, comparisons, and contrasts. The imaginative worlds of Dr. Seuss and J. R. R. Tolkien are based on what is familiar to the reader. Exercise of the imagination can be an important part of a unit in literature. Fourth and fifth graders enjoy oral projects in which the children develop imaginary settings with imaginary people. *The Borrowers,* by Mary Norton, is an excellent example of literature that can be used as a springboard for this exercise.

Time. Although time is part of the setting, it is presented separately because it can be identified by itself. Fairy tales do not rely on concepts of time. The concept of time possessed by the youngest listener or reader has not yet developed to a level where it is important to establish time in the fairy tale. "Once upon a time . . ." provides sufficient orientation.

Advanced development in the establishment of time is often indicated by association with a known period of time or events, as "in the days of King Arthur." The author uses words to describe a certain period, and the time element unfolds for the reader along with the setting.

The reader picks up clues about time incidentally from the writing itself. Although the writing may not be of direct interest, it helps one to appreciate more fully the action or motives of the writer.

Characterization

Characterization in fiction is the revelation of the characters of imaginary persons. Character development is frequently at the heart of adult literature but not of children's literature. The emotional maturity of children has not usually developed to the point where emotional understanding can be explored in depth. Virgil Ward states, for example, that "Shakespeare and youth are wasted on the young, and children introduced to Shakespeare too young may be 'turned off' for Shakespeare for years."[1] Two of the many books that balance excitement and description of character are *Shadow of a Bull* and *Island of the Blue Dolphin.*

Much of today's literature written for pupils in grades four through six is restricted to physical description. This limitation makes the material less satisfactory to the gifted child, who has the potential to make character assessments in more than one dimension. He is able to appreciate character descriptions in depth and rightfully expects characters to be so described in terms of their feelings. The teacher then should look for character descriptions that do not rely totally either on physical descriptions or on verbal descriptions of feelings. For the gifted, literature should be selected that moves the character into situations portraying reactions in terms familiar to the reader.

Primary and secondary characters ought to be specifically defined. The primary character moves through the plot; it is "his" story. Secondary characters have another function to perform. They may provide interaction, contrast, or opposition to the primary character. They may belong to a subplot or to the main story, or they may be presented as a means of strengthening one of the motives of the writer.

Plot

Plot is the plan or pattern of events in a literary work. It is the "yellow brick road" for the reader. He follows it, and if it leads to excitement and interest, he will be joyful and will finish the book.

Types of plot. The general types of plot found in most children's literature are twofold. One type is composed of closely related chapters and moves towards a major climax. It may have lesser

[1]See Virgil S. Ward, *Educating the Gifted: An Axiomatic Approach.* Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1961.

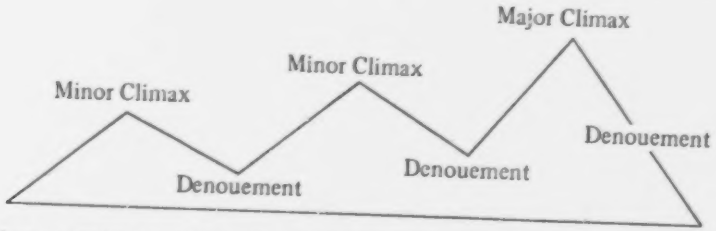
climaxes preceding it. Another type is composed of chapters, each of which has a story in itself with the threadlike connection being the same characters or the same setting.

Importance of plot. More than any other single element, plot influences the judgment and choice of the child. Many series of books that are sometimes unpopular with teachers and parents retain their lasting popularity with children because the plot develops so quickly; for example, in the stories about Nancy Drew and about the Hardy Boys. These books are seldom outstanding in creative language or social insight, but they do fill a need at a time when children are most interested in action. Their reading speed is not yet advanced enough so that they can cope with a plot that unravels more slowly.

If the gifted child is not allowed to satisfy his interest in such books, he may turn away from reading. If his knowledge is thereby limited to one method of plot structure, he will fail to grow in the understanding of the elements of literature. His interest in reading may become severely limited, and he may never learn to analyze the transformations of plots found in higher literature. For example, one of the reasons that *Ulysses* is obscure to most adults is that they have not progressed to where they can make or identify transformations.

Climax. Climax is integral to the plot and is a significant action on the part of primary character. Teachers can introduce the concept of climax by pointing out how subtly it begins and which section of the story or book it occupies.

Plot development. The teacher can diagram plot development as follows:



The denouement resolves the story after a climax. In fairy tales the denouement is the statement "And they lived happily ever after."

Action. The plot depends on the action of characters. At this grade level the action is mostly physical and is described as an inner conflict in the primary character revealed before the action of the climax.

Because gifted children have longer interest spans (and some may read at a faster rate), they are capable of handling more than one sequence at a time. They should have reading material that is

complex in plot structure. The observant teacher will know which gifted children can handle more advanced plots and which ones need to read at a less complex level.

Subplots. Subplots exist primarily to maintain interest by adding complexity. They serve as contrasts and comparisons with the main plot. Parallel plots, or counterplots, function similarly to subplots. *The Prince and the Pauper* exemplifies the use of a parallel plot for contrast and comparison. Books with parallel plots offer excellent opportunities for the gifted child to develop skill in concentration.

Point of View (Voice)

Point of view (voice) refers to the vantage point from which an author presents the actions of a fictitious story. To introduce the concept of point of view to a class, the teacher may use examples from satire or poetry. Several examples of point of view can be demonstrated and discussed in one class period. The examples can be divided into those told objectively by the writer and those told by a character whom the writer has created. In the first kind the writer may wear the mask of a storyteller to show how objectivity is achieved with the use of the mask. In the second kind the writer creates a person through whom he expresses the feeling he wants to communicate with the reader. The second method establishes a more personal relationship between the writer and the reader.

Theme

Theme is the central or dominating idea in a literary work. In fiction it is the abstract concept that is made concrete through its representation in person, action, and image in the work. The children can be told that theme refers to the main idea or meaning of a work of literature.

The children should learn (1) that the theme may be the statement of either an idea or a moral; and (2) that the theme may be either explicit or implied. Activities that can be undertaken to promote this learning are as follows:

1. Divide the class into small discussion groups. Give each group a story and ask that the theme be identified. Then write the identified themes on the chalkboard and encourage the children to discuss them.
2. Read aloud to the children brief passages from works of literature. Ask the children to state orally or to write down the theme of each passage read. Or reverse the procedure by giving the children a list of themes and asking them to write a brief story that illustrates one of the themes.

3. Prepare a group of brief passages to be read to the class. Both explicit and implied themes should be represented. Ask the children to identify the themes of the passages read aloud. Encourage discussion by asking such questions as follows:

   Does the author state anywhere what the theme of the story is?

   Does one of the characters in the story say what the theme is?

   Are words or phrases repeated? Do they suggest the main theme?

   Is there a solution to the main problem or conflict encountered in the story?

   Do the problem and its solution point toward the theme?

   Would the theme be different if the solution to the problem were different?

Elements of Poetry

The elements of poetry discussed in this chapter are sound, meter, stanza, alliteration, and imagery.

Sound

Good writing sounds good to the ear. If the teacher wants to begin a unit in listening to poetry, recordings of readings will introduce a respect for poetry that might not be obtained otherwise. Selections of prose and poetry should frequently be read aloud by the students as well as by the teacher.

Haiku. Poetry with and without rhyme can be introduced. Haiku poetry, introduced in the fourth grade, shows how sounds can be used to connote national values. Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry that states in three lines of five, seven, and five syllables a clear picture designed to arouse a distinct emotion and suggest a specific spiritual insight. It can be produced in (1) a strict form based on syllable count; and (2) the form in which creation of image includes emotional connotations. This simple form of poetry shows that rhyme is unessential to poetry; it is only one of many possible elements. An extension of the study of haiku can lead to presentation of a few short avant-garde poems that have similar construction but differences in clarity. The *Saturday Review* occasionally publishes simple examples.

Steps in development. The steps to be taken in the development of a unit on poetry are as follows:

1. The sound of words must appeal to the sense of hearing. An understanding of rhyme, meter, and alliteration can be taught separately and examples researched for each.

2. The development of imagery becomes important as the pupil seeks the meaning and associations of words.
3. Connotational meaning evolves as the reader increases his ability to make associations, comparisons, and contrasts.

The gifted pupil has an awareness of the importance of sound although that awareness may be limited to the mechanics of rhyme. He may become interested in the use of certain words because of images they create. A few will develop abilities to relate connotational meaning to poetry, and gifted pupils will often show promise toward mastering the writing of good poetry. In such instances a class project to compile student poems is an excellent activity.

The mechanics of poetry or the mechanics of any form of literature should not obscure reading for appreciation. One gifted child enjoys discovering rhyme pattern and meter more than discovering the meaning of poetry itself. Another is more naturally drawn to meanings. A few may even be drawn to experiencing the impact of emotionally laden words; these are the verbally fluent, creative gifted children. The mechanics of poetry are important to poetry, but neither they nor the intention of the writer should be dealt with exclusively.

Meter

Meter is the recurrence in poetry of a rhythmic pattern. Meters commonly found in English poetry are as follows:

Dimeter: two feet per line
Trimeter: three feet per line
Tetrameter: four feet per line
Pentameter: five feet per line
Hexameter: six feet per line

The foot, the smallest form of measurement in poetry, is the rhythmic unit within a line of poetry. The common forms are (1) iambic (an unaccented syllable followed by an accented syllable); (2) trochaic (an accented syllable followed by an unaccented syllable); (3) anapestic (two unaccented syllables followed by an accented syllable); and (4) dactylic (an accented syllable followed by two unaccented syllables).

Stanza

The stanza, which is a recurrent grouping of two or more lines of a poem, is another mechanism of poetry. Common stanza forms are as follows:

Couplet: two lines
Tercet: three lines

Quatrain: four lines
Sonnet: fourteen lines
Blank verse: unrhymed
Free verse: no set pattern

Many rhyme patterns accompany the stanza form. The rhyme pattern depends on the form of the stanza. A sonnet has at least two major rhyme patterns. Such mechanics can be presented at a simple level as a creative exploration in comprehension and in divergent production.

Alliteration

Alliteration is the repetition of usually initial consonant sounds in two or more neighboring words or syllables. A good example of consonantal alliteration is contained in Coleridge's lines:

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free.

Alliteration is another means of providing sound to poetry. Because it is frequently overlooked as a device for poetical effect, it needs to be emphasized and illustrated.

Imagery

A primary element of poetry, imagery is the creation of an image with words. The writer brings to the mind of the reader (or listener) a specific image designed to elicit a response from the recipient. This complex process requires a step-by-step explanation by the teacher to show how images work. Because of his superior abilities, the gifted child brings insight to the study of imagery and is able to accept some adult poetry on at least more than one level of understanding.

The study of metaphor is included under the study of imagery. And the simpler technique of personification – a figure of speech that endows animals, ideas, abstractions, and inanimate objects with human form, character, or sensibilities – can also be included.

Chapter 4

Development of Skills and Potential

The skills to be developed by gifted children in their study of literature can be divided into subject-area skills and higher intellectual skills. Also to be considered is the development of each child's potential.

Subject-Area Skills

The subject-area skills discussed in this chapter are those pertaining to reading, selection of books, use of the library, use of language, and listening.

Reading

The rates of reading that should be clarified for students are as follows:

1. A learning rate slow enough to permit a pupil to grasp the meaning of words, to build vocabulary, and to assimilate factual details
2. A faster rate for recreational reading (The child may need freeing from the fear that, unless he reads every word, he is not really reading, or worse, that he will be tested on everything he reads.)
3. Skimming for information

The child needs to develop his ability to read aloud. He should have many opportunities to read with expression to show that he comprehends what he is reading. Long-lasting benefits come from this kind of practice, including the ability to be comfortable in the presence of an audience.

Selection of Books

How does the gifted child develop skill in selecting reading material? He should be taught the purpose of the front sections of a book and of the information on the book jacket. He should learn how to evaluate the art in a book, how to evaluate the reading level, and how to skim the table of contents. If the reading of newspapers

and periodicals is encouraged, rate and selection skills will be practiced naturally. The writings of columnists and editorials may appeal to older children.

Use of Library

Library skills include the ability to use a card catalog and to locate books on the shelves. The student should know which sections contain works on literature, biography, fiction, religion, folktales, and mythology. It is advisable to include general information about the library in the beginning of the study of literature.

Use of Language

The completion of study assignments in the language arts and the writing of various forms of prose and poetry help the children to (1) appreciate the mechanics of various kinds of literature; and (2) develop creative writing ability. The outlining of major divisions of plot structure may be influential in developing these skills, but the effectiveness of this procedure depends on the ability of the pupil and his willingness to take time away from his reading to outline. The matter of outlining is dealt with at length in the study of English usage.

Listening

Listening skills develop long before students enter the fourth grade. Refined skills can, however, be developed through the selection of (1) poetry, for its sound value (see previous section); and (2) prose, for listening for details. The reader's inflection and tone need to be clarified because they give the listener clues to the mood or attitude of the piece of literature. The teacher who reads to his pupils to help them to develop listening skills can explain how facial clues are part of interpretation. Listening skills are important for all children to develop, but the gifted pupil who has poor auditory memory or emotional "blinders" needs these skills even more. It is important here to select material that does not make demands beyond the vocabulary and comprehension levels of the pupils.

Higher Intellectual Skills

The higher intellectual skills to be developed by the gifted child in his study of literature are as follows:

1. *Evaluation* (independent thinking). The teacher should present opportunities for the child to examine and analyze material on his own and to arrive independently at stated conclusions. The teacher can then review and discuss the adequacies or alternative conclusions with the pupil.

2. *Divergent production*
   a. *Critical thinking.* The teacher should provide opportunities to solve problems requiring new and improved methods of action. The interpretation of a character's motivation or the consideration of alternative courses of action for a character to follow are problems that the child can attempt to solve.
   b. *Creative thinking.* Creative potential can grow only in a positive, accepting atmosphere. Ample free time to complete tasks is necessary; time for incubation is essential.
3. *Recognition of implications* (original work). Writing to create a form of literature and to evaluate a work are exercises requiring ability to recognize implications.
4. *Development of hypotheses* (inquiry). The skills of inquiry can be developed through the use of questions about literature that yield productive answers. Hypothesizing can be taught along with the skill of testing a hypothesis about what he reads. Before giving an assignment, the teacher may wish to present leading questions such as Why does the writer set this story in this particular city? or What actions led to the decision that the boy made?
5. *Comparison and contrast.* One reason for presenting the great themes of literature is to use literary material for the development of skills underlying the making of comparisons.
   a. The kinds of comparisons to be made include (1) the comparison of a literary work with a similar model of excellence; and (2) the comparison of one type of literary work with another. The latter should be emphasized until the time comes when the child has had sufficient experience in literature to establish his own criteria for models of excellence. One is not able to keep from making comparisons, but one must learn to separate opinion from an analysis of facts. It is difficult to teach the skills of comparison and contrast so that they are constructive and provide valid conclusions.
   b. Judgment and comparison and contrast are based on comparisons with the ideal. Before he can learn to make valid judgments about the worth of a literary work, the pupil must have read much. At the same time his reading must have occurred in a free academic environment where his opinions and early evaluative attempts were accepted before being clarified. Judgment should be a part of each unit and should be developed at the conclusion of the study of similar material.

c. For the child who works out evaluations over longer periods of time, the solving of problems must take place during a relaxed assignment period. If this situation exists, the conscientious gifted child will not begin to associate evaluation and personal judgment with anxiety and thus avoid future involvement.
d. Oral discussion should be reflective. The teacher should encourage both slow and rapid responses. It is not the purpose of oral discussion to test recall; it is to give the gifted child a chance to use and develop his higher intellectual skills.

Development of Potential

Each type of literature discussed in this publication can be developed as a unit for each grade level. The development of each skill within the content and within each unit of study emphasizes listening, reading, and oral presentations. The construction and mechanics of the form of each skill need to be given as the occasion arises. At each level, for example, the teacher can expand pupil awareness of similarities of peoples through the use of the literatures of several nationalities and cultures. Suggested areas are determined primarily by the interests of the child at each level. The child should be provided with stories from each content area throughout the school year.

Fourth Grade

Folktales and mythology are favorites at the fourth-grade level. Because fairy tales are already well known to pupils entering the fourth grade, a unit of comparison and contrast can be made with folktales, such as the California Indian, Mexican, and Spanish folktales. This study can be integrated with units on the social sciences. Greek mythology can be used to introduce the concept of hero, and a comparison of mythology with fairy tales can be made.

The hero concept can be followed up by a unit on biographies. Simple biographies of familiar persons will intrigue a few gifted pupils. Another unit can consist of tracing concepts through various types of literature. Some teachers may wish to emphasize one type of literature instead of several. The major concepts and their relationships within the universality of literature should be defined.

In the fourth grade, poetry is best studied as a follow-up to the subject-matter content presented in the primary grades. More emphasis can be given to listening skills, speaking skills, and imagery. Generally speaking, the study of the mechanics of poetry is best limited to simpler rhymed or unrhymed poetry and imagery.

Fifth Grade

Folktales and biography are well accepted in grade five and remain preferred reading for many imaginative gifted children. The study of biographies can be expanded by the inclusion of books about American presidents. Students can compare and contrast the time when each president lived, the crises each encountered, and the methods each used to resolve the crises. The study of American presidents nationalizes and personalizes the hero concept.

When based on historical representation, drama is an exciting follow-up project for fifth graders. It gives opportunities to present the essential elements previously discussed and brings boys and girls together for some communication at a time when they are entering a period of extreme self-consciousness. A unit on poetry can include a discussion of complex imagery and the connotations of emotional relationships.

Elementary structures can be presented. Writing poetry in specific forms develops literary discipline, while the free writing or construction of images, if included in the curriculum for the fifth grade, will lead to performance of implications tasks.

Sixth Grade

Mythology may be given primary emphasis. The curriculum should encompass the study of words, including word origins; the history and culture of Greece; and the reading of the mythologies of other countries. Comparison and contrast are important to an appreciation of our literary heritage. The teacher who is interested may want to examine translated Greek lyrics and trace the relations between them and myths. *Greek Lyrics,* translated by Richmond Lattimore, is a paperback book published by Phoenix Books. These lyrics are exquisitely simple and offer high-level imagery.

Biography can include contemporaries and lesser-known Americans, as well as explorers, scientists, and religious leaders. Other kinds of literature should be taught, and it is probably more urgent now than in the two previous grades to give students free time that is nonstructured so that they can individualize their own study of literature. Of course, the elements of the narrative form can be given more emphasis than in the earlier grades.

Poetry may now emphasize theme and purpose. Details of poetic construction might also interest a few children. The poetry of America and England can be contrasted with the poetry of Mexico and Spain. The poetic prose of Juan Ramon Jimenez and his biography are suitable for such an approach.

Interrelationship of Content and Skills

Each area of literature offers opportunities to relate subject-area skills to subject content. Reading skills have primary importance. Structural analysis is usually taught in language usage, but the gifted child should be tested to find out whether he has entered the study of literature with a good ability in phonetic analysis. If not, individual work should be provided. A review of phonetic analysis can accompany the study of mythology in which children need to pronounce correctly the Greek names used in discussions.

Listening skills should be continually explored. Skill at oral reading or dramatic reading should be related to material of shorter length in each area. Dramatics should not be left solely to the literature of drama; it may be adapted to poetry for choral readings. Or a biography can be presented in dramatic form if speech skills are lacking.

Library skills should be taught together with other matters. The teacher should not teach these skills separately unless a particular gifted child prefers it to another unit. Library skills are developed by the use of assignments that require the use of the library for their completion.

Outlining is effectively taught in other subject areas as well as in literature, but its application in literature develops higher intellectual skills through practice in the organization of material. The need for a casual reading of a literary work is real, and this need should be zealously provided for the children by the teacher. Casual reading does not, however, reflect organization; therefore, outlining will help gifted children to organize the material they have read.

Challenge to Students

If the major skills to be developed through the study of literature are creative thinking, constructive thinking, and inquiry, then the teacher will constantly challenge students in several ways. One way is to ask questions that develop these abilities. These questions should not be directed to one area of literature in preference to another, nor should they be limited to the completion of the reading of a particular literary work. They should come before, during, and after reading. The teacher will find that his gifted students have a wide range of potential in creative production, but the development of creative ability requires planning.

Another way to challenge students is to begin with an exploration of hearing, feeling, and seeing. These modes enhance the insight and understanding that lead to creative products. The teacher who refrains from a direct informational approach will find that the Socratic method of asking questions will help his pupils obtain sufficient information for making generalizations and conclusions. The Socratic method can be used in the teaching of the mechanics or techniques of writing and during inquiry periods.

Instruction in Skills

Of major importance to the gifted child at this level are his listening skills. If well developed, they increase his appreciation of aural language and his level of achievement. An oral presentation of how writers use language is easier to assimilate than a presentation of how images are constructed. Writing skills should be secondary to listening skills because the child at this age usually cannot get his thoughts down on paper fast enough. Those who can write well provide a clue to the teacher that this ability may be a sign of high creative potential in verbal and motor fluency. Those who do not possess this motor fluency will feel inadequate and will begin to dislike written tasks. It is necessary that the assigned tasks coincide with the maturation and development level of the pupils.

Research skills can be taught in the study of literature as well as in the study of the social sciences and the natural sciences. The study of literature is to be considered as another area where library research skills and other skills related to the content of a study unit can be practiced.

Instructions in Creativity

Creativity is dependent on other intellectual skills. The teacher must do more than provide an interesting topic or motivation. He must (1) teach the ability to express what is perceived by the senses; (2) teach the child to use his senses fully; (3) teach the child to communicate effectively; and (4) provide opportunities for the child to be free to create. None of these is easily gained, and teachers will feel secure in their endeavors if their principals back them up.

The teacher who wants to develop creativity must know something about what studies have revealed about creativity. Many books summarize research into creativity with children (e.g., books by E. P. Torrance and J. Gallagher). Other books (e.g., books by James Smith and Albert Upton) offer concrete suggestions for developing creative potential. The gifted child has a higher potential for creativity, a potential which can be developed with specific exercises. It is neither sufficient nor efficient to provide only an opportunity to be creative; one must help the child to build the skills that aid in being creative. Literature is filled with models of creativity. As models they are important for the child to experience.

Instructions in Other Skills

Higher intellectual skills vary in each child. A teacher of gifted children should begin his teaching experience possessed of concrete knowledge about their individual intellectual differences. If adequate psychometric findings accompany the gifted child, the teacher can then lead the child from the level at which he is operating to a higher one. Small-group seminars in which the teacher provides the leadership in asking questions require children to use higher intellectual skills. The purpose of these discussions is not to establish recall alone but recall that aids in reaching conclusions, making comparisons, and contrasting books or stories. To be able to perform these operations, the children need common experiences. Listening to records at a listening post or having the teacher read a selection or providing common reading material through the use of inexpensive paperback books will provide some shared experiences.

Science Research Associates publishes a reading kit designed for comprehension called *Reading for Understanding.* The children listen to selections read from this material and give the rationale behind their selection of an answer. This approach requires that they comprehend relationships and use this ability with other intellectual skills.

It is desirable to have, after small-group work, problems for which students must be given more time to organize ideas and state conclusions. Written assignments should follow closely on instruction, and the teacher must be free to allow time in class for doing the assignment. If this procedure leads to frustration on the part of the child, it is possible to diagnose the problem immediately and to find out how ready the child is to perform without direct teacher guidance. The teacher who assigns these synthesizing activities as homework loses a valuable observational aid to teaching.

Appendix

Suggested Teaching Materials

Books

Author or editor	*Book*
Adoff, Arnold (editor)	*I Am the Darker Brother* (an anthology of Negro poetry)
Appiah, Peggy	*Ananse the Spider: Tales from an Ashanti Village*
Brink, Carol R.	*Caddie Woodlawn*
Church, Alfred E. (editor)	*The Iliad and the Odyssey of Homer*
Clemens, Samuel (Mark Twain)	*The Prince and the Pauper*
Colum, Padraic	*The Adventures of Odysseus and the Tale of Troy*
Colum, Padraic	*The Golden Fleece*
De La Ramee, Marie L.	*Dog of Flanders*
De Saint Exupery, Antoine	*The Little Prince*
De Trevino, Elizabeth	*I, Juan de Pareja*
Dodge, Mary M.	*Hans Brinker; or, The Silver Skates*
Dunning, Stephen (editor)	*Reflections on a Gift of Watermelon Pickle and Other Modern Verse*
Fisher, Anne B.	*Stories California Indians Told*
Forbes, Esther	*Johnny Tremain*
Gates, Doris	*Blue Willow*
Grahame, Kenneth	*The Wind in the Willows*
Green, Roger L.	*The Tale of Troy*

Author or editor	*Book*
Grimm Brothers	*Household Stories*
Hale, Edward E.	*The Man Without a Country*
Hunt, Irene	*Across Five Aprils*
Jimenez, Juan R.	*Platero and I*
Keith, Harold	*Rifles for Watie*
Kipling, Rudyard	*Just So Stories*
Kipling, Rudyard	*Kim*
Kingsley, Charles	*The Heroes*
Konigsburg, E. L.	*From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*
Krumgold, Joseph	*And Now Miguel*
Krumgold, Joseph	*Onion John*
Lagerlof, Selma	*The Wonderful Adventures of Nils*
Langdon, Jane	*Diamond in the Window*
Lee, Harper	*To Kill a Mockingbird*
L'Engle, Madeleine	*A Wrinkle in Time*
MacManus, Seumas	*Hibernian Nights*
Neville, Emily	*It's Like This, Cat*
Norton, Mary	*The Borrowers*
O'Dell, Scott	*Island of the Blue Dolphin*
Parkman, Francis	*The Oregon Trail*
Renault, Mary	*The Lion in the Gateway*
Roosevelt, Theodore	*Letters to His Children*
Ross, Norman E. (editor)	*The Life Treasury of American Folklore*

Author or editor	*Book*
Seredy, Kate	*The Good Master*
Seredy, Kate	*The Singing Tree*
Seredy, Kate	*The White Stag*
Speare, Elizabeth	*The Bronze Bow*
Speare, Elizabeth	*The Witch of Blackbird Pond*
Steinbeck, John	*The Long Valley*
Stevenson, Robert L.	*The Black Arrow*
Stevenson, Robert L.	*Treasure Island*
Thompson, Vivian L.	*Hawaiian Myths of Earth, Sea, and Sky*
Tolkien, J. R. R.	*The Hobbit*
Treece, Henry	*The Windswept City*
Untermeyer, Louis (editor)	*Aesop's Fables*
Waltari, Mika	*The Egyptian*
Wilde, Oscar	*The Happy Prince*
Wojciechowska, Maia	*Shadow of a Bull*
Yates, Elizabeth	*Amos Fortune, Free Man*

Recordings

Anthology of Contemporary American Poetry

Anthology of Negro Poets

Reflections on a Gift of Watermelon Pickle and Other Modern Verse

Sterling Brown and Langston Hughes

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